



State of South Carolina
The Family Court of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit

Rochelle Y. Conits
Judge

Post Office Box 757
Greenville, SC 29602
Phone: (864) 467-5841
Fax: (864) 467-5615
rconitsj@sccourts.org

TO: GREENVILLE COUNTY FAMILY COURT BENCH, BAR, AND CLERK
FROM: ROCHELLE Y. CONITS, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
DATE: JUNE 8, 2020
IN RE: FAMILY COURT PROCEDURES FOR JUNE 15TH – JULY 31ST, 2020

Pursuant to Justice Beatty's Supreme Court Order #447 dated April 22, 2020 and the Supreme Court Memorandum issued June 3, 2020, Greenville County Family Court shall operate under the following procedures from Monday, June 15, 2020 – Friday, July 31, 2020:

1. **Motions** shall be categorized and adjudicated as follows:

- (a) **Category #1 Motions** - Motions involving unrepresented litigants shall be docketed before a sitting judge, with a court reporter, giving the unrepresented litigant the option of appearing *via* WebEx, but allowing for them to appear in person if they choose. Your notice of this Motion must give instructions for the unrepresented litigant to provide you with an email address if he wishes to appear *via* WebEx with an explanation that his device must have a video and audio capability. You are responsible for getting that email address to the sitting judge prior to the hearing date and time. Represented litigants and their attorneys shall appear *via* WebEx in deference to Covid-19 recommendations. Attorneys retained prior to the WebEx hearing immediately shall file and serve a Notice of Representation, and the Clerk shall provide these Notices to the sitting judge. Where attorneys are retained prior to the scheduled WebEx hearing, the scheduled WebEx hearing will not go forward; rather, attorneys shall file affidavits no later than the scheduled date and time of the hearing.
- (b) **Category #2 Motions** - Motions involving represented litigants shall be handled *via* affidavit. These matters will be assigned to a presiding judge, without a court reporter, who will contact attorneys to give deadlines for affidavit submission. Upon reviewing the affidavits, should the assigned judge believe a WebEx or in-person hearing is necessary, the assigned judge shall schedule it during his/her next term of court.

For Motions previously placed on a docket during this time period and for which you have received a Notice of Hearing, the matter will proceed consistent with the above:

- Where there are unrepresented litigants, the matter will proceed as docketing *via* WebEx with notice to be given to the unrepresented litigant of his choice to appear WebEx or in person;
 - Where there are only represented litigants, the matter will proceed *via* affidavit as directed by the assigned judge (it has been taken off the WebEx hearing docket, and your assigned judge will be in touch);
2. **Final Merits Contested Trials** - If you currently are scheduled for a final merits contested trial during this time period or you have submitted a hearing request for a final merits contested trial, your trial will be continued and/or your hearing requests held until Family Court resumes normal operations **unless different arrangements have been made with an assigned judge**. Final merit hearings requesting 2 or more days shall participate in a pre-trial conference prior to being scheduled. Your pre-trial judge will contact you to schedule this conference.
 3. **Contempt Hearings** - Contempt hearings needing less than 2 hours shall be conducted in-person with all Covid-19 social distancing and recommendations in place. These matters currently are being scheduled by Docket. Contempt hearings requesting more than 2 hours shall be continued until Family Court resumes normal operations **unless different arrangements have been made with an assigned judge**.
 4. **Institutional Dockets** - DSS and DJJ dockets shall resume normal docket time and these hearings shall be conducted *via* WebEx where possible. In-person hearings may take place at the discretion of the sitting judge as long as all Covid-19 social distancing protocol is possible. Orders of Protection hearings shall continue to be scheduled as in-person hearings.
 5. **Uncontested Divorce and Agreement Packets** - This procedure shall remain in place, and I encourage you to utilize this procedure for these uncontested matters. In addition, uncontested final hearings are being scheduled before sitting judges and shall be handled *via* WebEx where possible; however, the notice shall give an unrepresented litigant the option of appearing in-person as stated in Motions Category #1.
 6. **Adoptions** - Uncontested adoptions are being scheduled *via* WebEx before a sitting judge, with a court reporter **unless different arrangements have been made with an assigned judge**.
 7. **Emergency Motions** - These shall continue to be granted or denied and categorized as a Motion Category #1 or Motion Category #2.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address above should you have specific questions or concerns. I appreciate your patience as we move forward, and I know each of you join me in grieving our tremendous loss at the passing of Terry Reed. Docketing is working diligently to maintain the incredible standard of efficiency we have enjoyed for so many years under her direction. I congratulate Ashley Foy, Bobbie Hill, and Patsy Going for their continued and outstanding service in the wake of this loss and in these new and challenging times.